

House Local Government Committee

Michigan Townships Association
February 11, 2015

Michigan Townships Association

Our Mission:

To advance local democracy by fostering township leadership and public policy essential for a strong and vibrant Michigan

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What is a township?



- The most common form of local government in Michigan
- Michigan currently contains 1,240 townships - varying in size and population



What is a township?

- Home to more than half of all Michigan residents
- The governing unit for more than 96% of the geographic area of the state



Sources of Authority

- Michigan Constitution
- State statutes passed by the Legislature
- Case law (court decisions)



Limited Powers

- "...possess only those limited powers which are expressly conferred upon them by State Constitution or state statute or which are necessarily implied therefrom."

Hanselman v Killeen - 419 Mich. 168 (1984)

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Townships

Provide essential local government services:

- Provide fire, police and EMS
- Assess property
- Levy and collect taxes
- Conduct elections
- Make laws by adopting ordinances
- Regulate land use
- Regulate activities with general "police power" for public health, safety and welfare
- Exercise powers and duties expressly granted or fairly implied by law



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Townships

As a body corporate (municipal corporation):

- Acquire, own and dispose of real and personal property
- Sue and be sued
- Appoint necessary agents and attorneys for that purpose
- Make contracts necessary for the exercise of their corporate powers
- Incur and pay obligations
- Receive and deposit monies



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Township Functions

■ Mandated

- Elections
- Assessing
- Tax Collecting
- Township Board
Legislative Functions
- Open Meetings Act and
Freedom of Information
Act compliance
- Accounting, Audit, and
Financial Reporting



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Township Functions

■ Permissive

- Roads
- Fire Protection
- Police Protection
- Emergency Medical
- Water / Sewer
- Parks and Recreation
- Planning and Zoning
- Code Enforcement
- Ordinance Enforcement
- Liquor Inspections
- Library
- Cemetery



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Township Officers

- Supervisor
- Clerk
- Treasurer
- Trustees - not to exceed 4
- Terms - not less than 2 nor more than 4 years
 - Article VII, § 18 Township officers; term, powers and duties.



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Two Kinds of Townships

- General Law Townships
 - Michigan Constitution
 - Township Board
 - Supervisor
 - Clerk
 - Treasurer
 - 2 or 4 Trustees



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Two Kinds of Townships

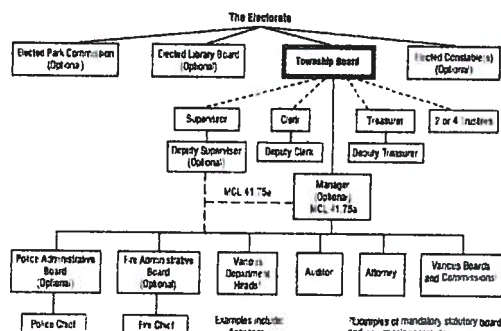
CHARTER TOWNSHIPS

- Over 2,000 population
- 4 Trustees
- All authorities of a General Law Township, plus ...
- The Charter Township Act
- Administrative authority delegated to supervisor or superintendent
- Qualified boundary protection
- MAY have additional taxation authority (qualified)

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Typical Organization Chart General Law Township

Township Law (Recodified), R.S. of 1846
MCL 41.1, et seq.

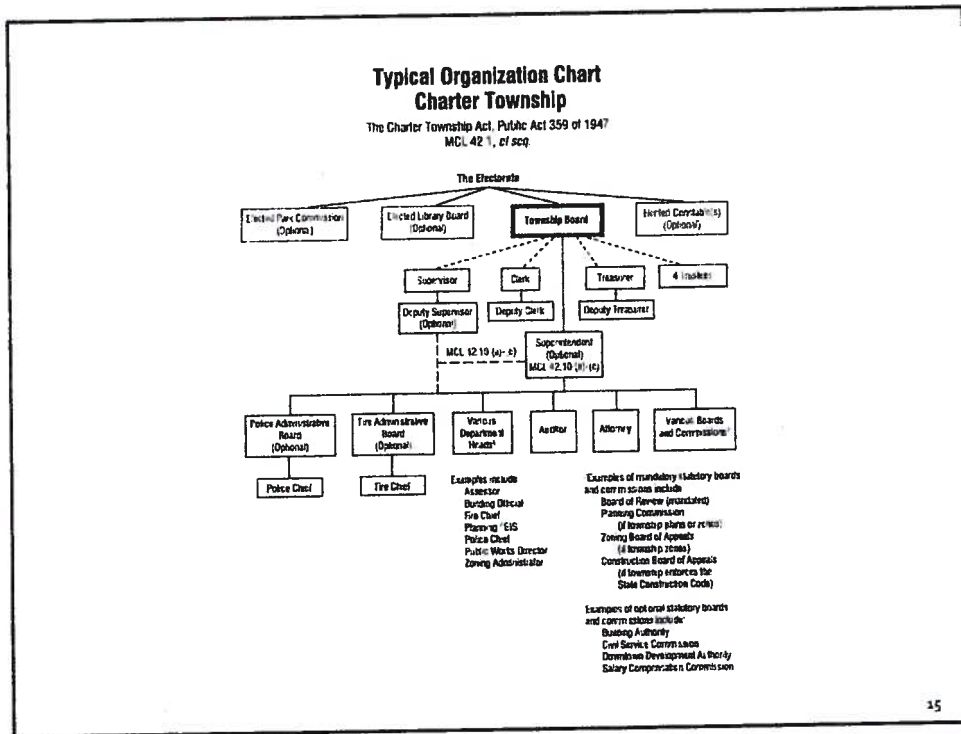


Examples include:
Assessor
Building Official
Fire Chief
Police Chief
Planning/OS
Public Works Director
Zoning Administrator

*Examples of mandatory statutory boards and commissions include:
Board of Review (mandatory)
Planning Commission
(if township is not a first class township)
Zoning Board of Appeals
(if township is not a first class township)
Construction Board of Appeals
(if township is not a first class township)

Examples of optional statutory boards and commissions include:
Building Authority
Fire Service Commission
Downstream Development Authority
Salary Compensation Commission

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Examples of Township Departments

- Fire Department
- Building Department
- Planning & Zoning Department
- Assessing Department
- Parks Department
- Police Department



Statutory Boards & Commissions

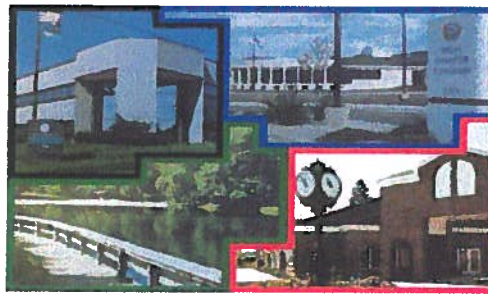
- Common township boards and commissions:

- Planning Board
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Board of Review
- Election Commission
- Police/Fire Administrative Board
- Library Board
- Park Commission



Interaction with Other Entities

Township officials cooperate with neighboring entities in the efficient delivery of services, infrastructure expansion, and appropriate economic development site selection.



Interaction with Other Entities

- Villages
 - assessing
 - appeal of assessments to Board of Review
 - village elections
 - collect village taxes
- School Districts
 - collect State Education Tax
 - collect school millage
- Counties

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Interaction with Other Entities

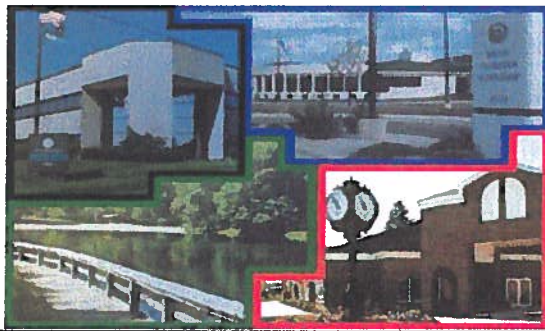
- County Road Commissions
 - pay for county road projects
 - enforce speeding, parking or other traffic violations
 - be involved with setting speed limits on co. highways
- County Sheriffs



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Strengthening for the future

- Regional partnerships for economic growth
- Job creation
- Maintaining and creating attractive communities



Michigan's Local Governments

- Michigan has 9th largest population
- Michigan has fewer local units
 - Ranking in bottom half of local units on a per capita basis
 - Lowest ratio of any other Great Lake State
- Michigan has lower local government payroll

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Keeping Power in the Hands of the People

- Townships allow people to live and work in **unique communities** that best match their **values and preferences** for taxation, service levels and regulatory climate
- Townships provide quality services to over 51 percent of Michigan's citizens



Questions

